Bidi Labour In the Country

225. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) the State-wise break-up of the bidi labour in the country as on date; and

(b) whether there has been an increase in the number of bidi workers employed in the country?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM): (a) A statement showing the state-wise breakup of the bidi labour in the country is annexed, *(see* below)

(b) The numbers of beedi workers at the end of last three financial years is given below:

Years	No. of beedi workers in lakhs)
1993-94	44.72
1994-95	42.59
1995-96	42.50

Statement

Name of the State	Total No. of Beedi Workers
1. West Bengal	4,75,000
2. Assam	7,725
3. Tripura	5,000
4. Orissa	1,60,000
5. Madhya Pradesh	6,60,000
6. Andhra Pradesh	6,00,000
7. Rajasthan	1,00,000
8. Gujarat	50,000
9. Karnataka	3,60,876
10. Kerala	1,36,419
11. Maharashtra	2,56,000
12. Bihar	3,91,500
13. Uttar Pradesh	4,50,000
14. Tamil Nadu	6,21,000
TOTAL:	42,73,520

Construction Workers Living below Poverty-Line

226. SHRI K.M. KHAN: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government have been drawn to the fact that construction workers are living below poverty line;

(b) whether Government have been requested to cover these workers under the Group Insurance Scheme and set up All India Wage Board;

(c) whether Government have taken any action on these facts/requests so far; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM): (a) to (d) While no exclusive Survey of construction workers has been done their minimum wages are fixed under the Minimum Wages Act by the concerned appropriate Government. The Central Government has fixed the minimum wage for construction workers at Rs. 34.96 per day. The Central Government has also recently advised all the State Government to ensure that no minimum wage for any occupation is fixed below Rs. 35 per day which has been recommended as the minimum floor level wage by the Indian Labour Conference in October, 1996. The Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996 envisages establishment of Welfare Funds to be used for the purposes listed out in Section 22 of the Act. One of these is payment of premia for the Group Insurance Scheme for such workers.